

FOREST LIFE IN CANADA WEST.

LADIES of Britain, deftly embroidering in carpeted saloon, gracefully bending over cæsar or harp, pressing, with nimble finger, your piano's ivory, or joyously tripping in Cellarian circles, suspend, for a moment, your silken pursuits, and look forth into the desert at a sister's sufferings! May you never, from stern experience, learn fully to appreciate them. But, should fate have otherwise decreed, may you equal her in fortitude and courage. Meanwhile, transport yourselves, in imagination's car, to Canada's backwoods, and behold one, gently nurtured as yourselves, cheerfully condescending to rudest toils, unrepiningly enduring hardships you never dreamed of. Not to such hardships was she born, nor educated for them. The comforts of an English home, the endearments of sisterly affection, the refinement of literary tastes, but ill prepared the emigrant's wife to work, in the rugged and inclement wilderness, harder than the meanest of the domestics, whom, in her own country, she was used to command. But where are the obstacles and difficulties that shall not be overcome by a strong will, a warm heart, a trusting and cheerful spirit?—precious qualities, strikingly combined by the lady of whose countless trials and troubles we have here an affecting and remarkable record.

The Far West of Canada is so remote a residence, and there is so much oblivion in a lapse of twenty years, that it may be necessary to mention who the authoress—who now appeals (successfully, we are much mistaken) to the favour of her countrymen, and more especially of her countrywomen. Of a family well known in literature, Mrs. Moodie is a sister of Miss Agnes Strickland, the popular and accomplished historical biographer. In 1831, Miss Susanna Strickland published a volume of poems. Had she remained in England, she in time, perhaps, might have rivalled her sister's fame as one of

the most distinguished female writers of the day. But it was otherwise ordained. In 1832 she sailed, as Mrs. Moodie, an emigrant to Canada. Under most unfavourable circumstances, she still from time to time took up the pen. The anxieties and accidents of her forest life, her regrets for the country she loved so well, and had left, perhaps, for ever, and, subsequently, the rebellion in Canada, suggested many charming songs and poems, some of which are still extremely popular in our North American colony. Years passed amidst hardships and sufferings. At last a brighter day dawned, and it is from a tranquil and happy home, as we gladly understand, that the settler's brave wife has transmitted this narrative of seven years' exertion and adventure.

Inevitable hardships, some ill luck, some little want of judgment and deliberation, make up the history of Captain and Mrs. Moodie's early days in Canada. "I give you just three years to spend your money and ruin yourself," said an old Yankee hag with whom the Captain was concluding the purchase of a wretched log-hut. It scarcely took so long. Borrowing our colours from Mrs. Moodie's pages, we may broadly sketch the discomforts of the emigrant's first few months in Canada. These were passed near the village of C—, on the north shore of Lake Ontario. A farm of one hundred and fifty acres, about fifty of which were cleared, was purchased by Captain Moodie for £300, of a certain Q—, a landjobber.

"Q—," says the Captain, who has contributed two or three chapters to his wife's book, "held a mortgage for £150, on a farm belonging to a certain Yankee settler, named Joe H—, as security for a debt incurred for goods at his store. The idea instantly struck him that he would compel Joe H— to sell him his farm, by threatening to foreclose the mortgage. I drove out with Mr. Q— next day to see the farm in question. It was situated in a pretty retired valley.

Roughing it in the Bush; or, Life in Canada. By SUSANNA MOODIE. In 2 vols. London: 1852.

surrounded by hills, about eight miles from C—, and about a mile from the great road leading to Toronto. There was an extensive orchard upon the farm, and two log-houses, and a large frame-barn. A considerable portion of the cleared land was light and sandy; and the uncleared part of the farm, situated on the flat rocky summit of a high hill, was reserved for 'a sugar bush,' and for supplying fuel."

Pleased with the place, Captain Moodie bought it, and, having done so, had leisure to repent his bargain. Of the land he got possession in the month of September; but it was not till the following summer that the occupants of the house could be prevailed upon to depart. Until then the new comers dwelt in the wretched hut already mentioned. Even to this hovel Mrs. Moodie's English habits of order and neatness imparted something like comfort; but a still greater evil, beyond her power to remedy, was connected with her residence. Her nearest neighbours were disreputable Yankee settlers.

"These people regarded British settlers with an intense feeling of dislike, and found a pleasure in annoying and insulting them when any occasion offered. They did not understand us, nor did we them, and they generally mistook the reserve which is common with the British towards strangers, for pride and superciliousness.

" 'You Britishers are too *superstitious*,' one of them told me on a particular occasion.

"It was some time before I found out what he meant by the term '*superstitious*,' and that it was generally used by them for '*supercilious*.'"

All that poor Mrs. Moodie endured from her reprobate neighbours, could not be told in detail within the compass of a much larger work than hers. But we may glean a tolerable idea of her constant vexations and annoyance from her first volume, which contains sketches, at once painful and humorous, of the persecutions to which she was subjected. Impudent intrusion and unscrupulous borrowings were of daily occurrence, varied occasionally by some gross act of unneighbourliness and aggression. Although evidently a person of abundant energy and spirit, Mrs. Moodie, partly through terror of these semi-savages, and partly

from a wish to conciliate and make friends, long submitted to insolence and extortion. The wives and daughters of the Yankee settlers—some of whom had "squatted," without leave or license, on ground to which they had no right, made a regular property of her. Every article of domestic use, kettles and pans, eatables, drinkables, and wearables, did these insatiable wretches borrow—and never return. They would walk into her house and carry off the very things she at the moment needed, or come in her absence and take her gown from the peg, or the pot from the fire. The three families from which she had most to endure were those of a red-headed American squatter, who had fled his own country for some crime; of "Uncle Joe," the former proprietor of her farm, and still the occupant of her house; and of "Old Satan," a disgusting and brutal Yankee, who had had one eye gouged out in a fight, and whose face was horribly disfigured by the scars of wounds inflicted by his adversary's teeth. A pertinacious tormentor, too, was old Betty Fye, who lived in the log shanty across the creek. Having made Mrs. Moodie's acquaintance, under pretence of selling her a "rooster," she became a constant and most unwelcome visitor, borrowing everything she could think of, returning nothing, and interlarding her discourse with oaths, which greatly shocked the good-tempered English lady.

" 'Everybody swears in this country,' quoth Betty Fye. 'My boys (she was a widow with twelve sons) all swear like Sam Hill; and I used to swear mighty big oaths, till about a month ago, when the Methody parson told me that if I did not leave it off I should go to a tarnation bad place; so I dropped some of the worst of them.

" 'You would do well to drop the rest; women never swear in my country.'

" 'Well, you don't say! I always heard they were very ignorant. Will you lend me the tea?'

Tea to-day—it was something else to-morrow. Mrs. Moodie tried every means of affronting her, but long without success. The most natural and effectual plan would have been to refuse all her demands; but to this Mrs. Moodie, perhaps from unwilling-

ness to disoblige, was tardy in having recourse. At last she got rid of her by quoting Scripture.

"The last time I was honoured with a visit from Betty Fye, she meant to favour me with a very large order upon my goods and chattels.

"Well, Mrs. Fye, what do you want to-day?"

"So many things, that I scarce know where to begin. Ah, what a thing 'tis to be poor! First, I want you to lend me ten pounds of flour to make some Johnnie cakes."

"I thought they were made of Indian meal?"

"Yes, yes, when you've got the meal. I'm out of it, and this is a new fixing of my own invention. Lend me the flour, woman, and I'll bring you one of the cakes to taste."

"This was said very coaxingly.

"Oh, pray don't trouble yourself. What next?" I was anxious to see how far her impudence would go, and determined to affront her, if possible.

"I want you to lend me a gown and a pair of stockings. I have to go to Oswego, to see my husband's sister, and I'd like to look decent."

"Mrs. Fye, I never lend my clothes to any one. If I lent them to you, I should never wear them again."

"So much the better for me" (with a knowing grin). "I guess if you won't lend me the gown, you will let me have some black slack to quilt a stuff petticoat, a quarter of a pound of tea and some sugar; and I will bring them back as soon as I can."

"I wonder when that will be. You owe me so many things that it will cost you more than you imagine to repay me."

"Since you're not going to mention what's past, I can't owe you much. But I will let you off the tea and the sugar, if you will lend me a five-dollar bill."

This was too much for even Mrs. Moodie's patience. She read the incorrigible Betty a sharp lecture upon her system of robbing under colour of borrowing, and concluded by saying she well knew that all the things she had lent her would be a debt owing to the day of judgment.

"S'pose they are," quoth Betty, not in the least abashed at my lecture on honesty, "You know what the Scripture saith, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

"Ay, there is an answer to that in the same book, which doubtless you may have heard," said I, disgusted with her

hypocrisy, "The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again."

"Never shall I forget the furious passion into which this too apt quotation threw my unprincipled applicant. She lifted up her voice and cursed me, using some of the big oaths temporarily discarded for conscience' sake. And so she left me, and I never looked upon her face again."

Uncle Joe was another pleasant neighbour, and brought up his children to resemble himself. Mrs. Joe would occasionally stroll over to visit Mrs. Moodie, and exult over the unaccustomed toils to which the young English wife and mother submitted with a cheerfulness that did her infinite honour. It was a rough and hard life, even for men, in that Canadian loghouse; much worse, then, for a delicate woman, and worst of all for one who arrived there with an infant, and whose family rapidly augmented.

"For a week I was alone," writes Mrs. Moodie, in the early days of her exile, "my good Scotch girl having left me to visit her father. Some small baby-articles were needed to be washed, and after making a great preparation, I determined to try my unskilled hand upon the operation. The fact is, I knew nothing about the task I had imposed upon myself, and in a few minutes rubbed the skin off my wrists, without getting the clothes clean. The door was open, as it generally was, even during the coldest winter days, in order to let in more light and let out the smoke, which otherwise would have enveloped us like a cloud. I was so busy that I did not perceive that I was watched by the cold, heavy, dark eyes of Mrs. Joe, who, with a sneering laugh, exclaimed, 'Well, thank God! I am glad to see you brought to work at last.'"

Further, the amiable Mrs. Joe declared her intense hatred of all Britishers, and her hearty wish that her unoffending neighbour might be brought down upon her knees to scrub the floor. Mrs. Moodie had sense and dignity enough merely to smile at her vulgar malignity. The impudence of these people knew no bounds. The same evening, Mrs. Joe sent over two of her offspring to borrow something she needed of the woman she had spitefully abused in the morning.

During Mrs. Moodie's abode near C——, Old Satan got married for the

fourth time. This was the occasion of a charivari, a custom dating from the French occupation of Canada, and still kept up there. Mrs. Moodie has an amusingly *naïf* chapter on this subject, concerning which she has collected some curious anecdotes. It is hardly necessary to explain that a mismatch—of a young and an old person—is the usual pretext for a charivari.

"The idle young fellows of the neighbourhood disguise themselves, blackening their faces, putting their clothes on hind part before, and wearing horrible masks, with grotesque caps on their heads, adorned with cocks' feathers, and bells. They then form in a regular body, and proceed to the bridegroom's house, to the sound of tin kettles, horns, drums, &c. Thus equipped, they surround the house, just at the hour when the happy couple are supposed to be about to retire to rest, beating upon the door with clubs and staves, and demanding of the bridegroom admittance to drink the bride's health, or in lieu thereof, a certain sum of money to treat the band at the nearest tavern."

Mrs. Moodie expresses all a woman's indignation at what she styles "a lawless infringement upon the natural rights of man." The charivari is usually bought off—she mentions an instance when thirty pounds were disbursed by an antiquated swain who had wedded a handsome widow—but sometimes the victim resists, and the consequences are serious. Shortly before old Satan's bridal, a tragical affair had taken place at one of these saturnalia.

"The bridegroom was a man in middle life, a desperately resolute and passionate man, and he swore that if such riff-raff dared to interfere with him, he would shoot at them with as little compunction as if they were so many crows. His threats only increased the mischievous determination of the mob to torment him; and when he refused to admit their deputation, or even to give them a portion of the wedding cheer, they determined to frighten him into compliance by firing several guns, loaded with peas, at his door. Their salute was returned from the chamber-window, by the discharge of a double-barrelled gun, loaded with buck-shot. The crowd gave back with a tremendous yell. Their leader was shot through the heart, and two of the foremost in the scuffle dangerously wounded. They vowed they would set fire to the

house, but the bridegroom boldly stepped to the window and told them to try it; and before they could light a torch he would fire among them again, for his gun was reloaded, and he would discharge it at them as long as one of them dared to remain on his premises. They cleared off."

In point of amusement there is little difference between the first and the second volumes of Mrs. Moodie's book—which, however, is not intended merely to amuse, but also as "a work of practical experience," written for the benefit of, and conveying useful hints to, persons contemplating emigration to Canada. The first volume is the gayest of the two; there is a vein of great humour in Mrs. Moodie's descriptions and sketches of her neighbours, and of her wild Irish servant, John Monaghan, who gave Uncle Joe an awful thrashing for purloining the captain's hay; and of Mrs. D., the Yankee lady, who considered her English neighbours shocking proud because they did not eat with their "helps," but was of opinion that all negroes were children of the devil, for that "God never condescended to make a nigger." But it is in the second volume that the interest is strongest, and at times becomes intense. Disgusted with their neighbours, Captain and Mrs. Moodie left their farm at C—, and removed to the township of Douro, forty miles off, in the backwoods, where they had friends and relatives settled, and where the society—consisting chiefly of English, Irish, and Scotch gentlemen, recently come from Europe, and many of them half-pay officers—was more congenial to their tastes and habits. Unfortunately, about this time Captain Moodie sold his commission, in consequence of an intimation in the newspapers that half-pay officers must either do so or join a regiment. This was not enforced in the case of officers settled in the colonies, and the captain greatly repented his haste; the more so, as he was induced to invest the proceeds of his sale in shares in a steamboat on Lake Ontario. Q—, the land-jobber, appears to have led him into this investment. He received no interest on his shares, and when, some years afterwards, the boat was

sold, he got back only a fourth of his capital. The mistake he made in parting with his half-pay was the cause of great privations and anxiety.

"It was a bright frosty morning," says Mrs. Moodie, "when I bade adieu to the farm, the birthplace of my little Agnes, who, nestled beneath my cloak, was sweetly sleeping on my knee, unconscious of the long journey before us into the wilderness. . . It was not without regret that I left Melsetter, for so my husband had called the place, after his father's estate in Orkney. It was a beautiful, picturesque spot; and, in spite of the evil neighbourhood, I had learned to love it; indeed, it was much against my wish that it was sold. I had a great dislike to removing, which involves a necessary loss, and is apt to give to the emigrant roving and unsettled habits. But all regrets were now useless; and, happily unconscious of the life of toil and anxiety that awaited us in those dreadful woods, I tried my best to be cheerful, and to regard the future with a hopeful eye."

Most nobly, when the toil and anxiety came, did this high-hearted woman bear up against them. Severe hardships and trials were perhaps never endured, for so long a period, by one of her delicate sex. At first, affairs looked promising in the forest. A timely legacy supplied means to purchase and clear land and to build a house; a considerable sum still remained in hand, and a good income from the steamboat stock was looked upon as certain. The first spring in the forest was spent in comparative ease and idleness.

"Those were the halcyon days of the bush. My husband had purchased a very light cedar canoe, to which he attached a keel and a sail; and most of our leisure hours, directly the snows melted, were spent upon the water. These fishing and shooting excursions were delightful. . . . We felt as if we were the first discoverers of every beautiful flower and stately tree that attracted our attention, and we gave names to fantastic rocks and fairy isles, and raised imaginary houses on every picturesque spot which we floated past during our aquatic excursions. I learned the use of the paddle, and became quiet a proficient in the gentle craft."

They received visits from the Indians, a number of whom (of the Chippewa tribe) frequented a dry

cedar-swamp hard by, fishing, shooting, and making maple-sugar, baskets, and canoes. They were friendly and communicative, grateful for the slightest kindness, never intrusive or offensively familiar; in short, they were born gentlemen, and in every respect a perfect contrast and immeasurably superior to the Yankee squatters at C—. Mrs. Moodie devotes the greater part of a most interesting chapter to stories and traits of her red friends. No attention, however small, was lost upon these warm-hearted people. One cold night, late in autumn, six squaws asked shelter of Mrs. Moodie. It was rather a large party to lodge, but forest hospitality is not stinted. There was "Joe Muskrat's squaw" and "Betty Cow," and an old white-haired woman, whose scarlet embroidered leggings showed her to be a chief's wife. After they had all well supped, mattresses and blankets were spread on the parlour floor for their use, and Mrs. Moodie considerably told her servant to give the aged squaw the best bed.

"The old Indian glanced at me with her keen, bright eye; but I had no idea that she comprehended what I said. Some weeks after this, as I was sweeping my parlour floor, a slight tap drew me to the door. On opening it I perceived the old squaw, who immediately slipped into my hand a set of beautifully embroidered bark trays, fitting one within the other, and exhibiting the very best sample of the porcupine-quill work. While I stood wondering what this might mean, the good old creature fell upon my neck, and kissing me, exclaimed, 'You remember old squaw—make her comfortable! Old squaw no forget you. Keep them for her sake,' and before I could detain her she ran down the hill with a swiftness which seemed to bid defiance to years. I never saw this interesting Indian again, and I concluded that she died during the winter, for she must have been of a great age."

When fortune frowned on *Nomocosiqui*, "the humming-bird," (the name given to Mrs. Moodie by the Indians, in allusion to the pleasure she took in painting birds,) when her purse and pantry were alike empty, and, in Indian phrase, "her hearthstone was growing cold," many an acceptable supply of much-needed food was brought to her by her red friends.

"Their delicacy in conferring these favours was not the least admirable part of their conduct. John Nogan, who was much attached to us, would bring a fine bunch of ducks, and drop them at my feet, 'for the papoose [child,]' or leave a large muskinonge on the sill of the door, or place a quarter of venison just within it, and slip away without saying a word, thinking that a present from a poor Indian might hurt our feelings, and he would spare us the mortification of returning thanks."

The coolness and courage of these Indians are remarkable. Mrs. Moodie tells a story of a squaw who was left by her husband in charge of some dead game, and who, whilst sitting carelessly upon a log, with his hunting-knife in her hand, heard a cracking amongst the branches, and, turning round, saw a bear within a few paces of her.

"It was too late to retreat; and seeing that the animal was very hungry, and determined to come to close quarters, she rose, and placed her back against a small tree, holding her knife close to her breast, and in a straight line with the bear. The shaggy monster came on. She remained motionless, her eyes steadily fixed upon her enemy, and as his huge arms closed around her, she slowly drove the knife into his heart. The bear uttered a hideous cry, and sank dead at her feet. When the Indian returned, he found the courageous woman taking the skin from the carcass of the formidable brute."

Mrs. Moodie was not likely to emulate such feats as this. She had a horror of wild beasts, and was afraid even of cattle. Her dread of lions, tigers, and other unamiable carnivora, was the reason of her finding herself in Canada. Her husband had a property in South Africa, where he had passed many years, and whither the fine climate and scenery made him desirous to return. But his wife would not hear of it, and, when he tried to remove her exaggerated terrors, referred him triumphantly to the dangerous encounters and hairbreadth escapes recorded in a book of his own, called *Ten Years in South Africa*. A European woman's fear of tigers and rattle-snakes is natural enough, and let none impute want of courage to Mrs. Moodie. The hero of a hundred fights might

feel nervous, if perched on the top-gallant-yards of a frigate, whose captain might prefer boarding a French three-decker to riding at a bull-fence. Mrs. Moodie's courage was not of the bear-fighting sort, but of a higher kind—moral, rather than physical. We read with admiration and deep sympathy of her presence of mind and intrepidity upon many trying occasions—when her house, for instance, was blazing over her head, and she alone was there to rescue her four children and such portions of her worldly possessions as her strength enabled her to carry out of the cedar-log dwelling, whose roof "was burning like a brush heap, and, unconsciously, she and her eldest daughter were working under a shelf upon which was deposited several pounds of gunpowder, procured for blasting a well. The gunpowder was in a stone-jar, secured by a paper stopper; the shelf upon which it stood was on fire." As to her fortitude under severe suffering—from bitter cold and other causes—and the perseverance with which she toiled, even at farm-labour, they are beyond praise.

"In the year 1835, my husband and I," she says, "had worked hard in the field; it was the first time I had ever tried my hand at field-labour, but our ready money was exhausted, and the steamboat stock had not paid us one farthing; we could not hire, and there was no help for it. I had a hard struggle with my pride before I would consent to render the least assistance on the farm, but reflection convinced me that I was wrong—that Providence had placed me in a situation where I was called upon to work—that it was not only my duty to obey that call, but to exert myself to the utmost to assist my husband, and help to maintain my family."

Most affecting is the account that follows, of hopes disappointed and hardships endured, in the years 1836 and 1837. To pay off debts—incurred chiefly for clearing land, and in confident expectation of deriving an income from the steamboat—Captain and Mrs. Moodie resorted to a pinching economy. Milk, bread, and potatoes, were for months their only fare. Tea and sugar were luxuries not to be thought of. "I missed the tea very much," says the poor

English lady, who, on an anchorite's fare, performed a day-labourer's task, hoeing potatoes, and cheerfully sharing with her husband the rude toils of the field. "We rang the changes on peppermint and sage, taking the one herb at our breakfast, the other at our tea, until I found an excellent substitute for both in the root of the dandelion." This root, roasted crisp, and ground, proved a very good imitation of coffee. Squirrel—stewed, roast, and in pies—was a standard dish at the dinner-table in the bush. In a trap set near the barn, often ten or twelve were caught in a day. But the lake was the great resource.

"Moodie and I used to rise by day-break, and fish for an hour after sunrise, when we returned, he to the field, and I to dress the little ones, clean up the house, assist with the milk, and prepare the breakfast. Oh, how I enjoyed those excursions on the lake!—the very idea of our dinner depending upon our success added double zest to the sport."

Even here there was some compensation. The strange, Robinson-Crusoe-like existence had its joys as well as its sorrows. Who can doubt that, seasoned by labour, squirrel pie had, for the dwellers in the forest, such savour as few epicures find in pastry of choicest venison? The warm breath of summer, too, alleviated the hardships of the poor emigrants. But winter came, and, with winter, privation and misfortune.

"The ruffian squatter P—, from Clear Lake, drove from the barn a fine young bull we were rearing, and for several weeks all trace of the animal was lost. We had almost forgotten the existence of poor Whisky, when a neighbour called and told Moodie that his yearling was at P—'s, and that he would advise him to get it back as soon as possible. Moodie had to take some wheat to Y—'s mill, and as the squatter lived only a mile farther, he called at his house; and there, sure enough, he found the lost animal. With the greatest difficulty he succeeded in regaining his property, but not without many threats of vengeance from the parties who had stolen it. To these he paid no regard; but a few days after, six fat hogs, on which we depended for all our winter store of animal food, were driven into the lake and destroyed.

The death of these animals deprived us of three barrels of pork, and half-starved us through the winter. That winter of '36, how heavily it wore away! The grown flour, frosted potatoes, and scant quantity of animal food, rendered us all weak, and the children suffered much from the ague."

Under these circumstances, great was the glee when a stray buck was shot. Spot, Katie's pet pig, had to be killed, in spite of the tears and entreaties of its little owner, for the family were craving after a morsel of meat. Here is a melancholy note in the diary of the emigrant's wife:—

"On the 21st May of this year, my second son, Donald, was born. The poor fellow came in hard times. The cows had not calved, and our bill of fare, now minus the deer and Spot, only consisted of bad potatoes, and still worse bread. I was rendered so weak by want of proper nourishment that my dear husband, for my sake, overcame his aversion to borrowing, and procured a quarter of mutton from a friend. This, with kindly presents from neighbours—often as badly off as ourselves—a loin of a young bear, and a basket containing a loaf of bread, some tea, fresh butter, and oatmeal, went far to save my life."

Think of this, ye dainty dames, who, in like circumstances, heap your beds with feathers, and strew the street with straw. Think of the chilly forest, the windy log-house, the frosted potatoes, the five children, the weary, half-famished mother, the absence of all that gentle aid and comfort which wait upon your slightest ailment. Think of all these things, and, if the picture move you, remember that the like sufferings and necessities abound nearer home, within scope of your charity and relief.

Quitting, for a while, the sad catalogue of her woes, Mrs. Moodie launches forth into an episode which fills one of the most characteristic chapters of her work. In the midst of these hard times, an Englishman—with whom Captain Moodie had once travelled in the mail to Toronto, and whom he had invited to call on him, should he come into his part of the country—dropped in upon them one evening, proposing to remain for the night. He was their inmate for nine months. Mrs. Moodie disliked him

from the very first day, for he was a surly, discontented, reckless scamp, but somehow there was no getting rid of him. He grumbled over his first meal of salt pork, dandelion coffee, and heavy bread; and he grumbled almost daily, until the happy morning when he left them for good and all. Malcolm (as Mrs. Moodie chooses to call him) told his host that he was in hiding from the sheriff's officers, and should esteem it a great favour to be allowed to remain a few weeks at his house. The captain was far too good-natured and hospitable to refuse his request. "To tell you the truth, Malcolm," said he, "we are so badly off that we can scarcely find food for ourselves and the children. It is out of our power to make you comfortable, or to keep an additional hand, without he is willing to render some little help on the farm. If you can do this, I will endeavour to get a few necessities on credit, to make your stay more agreeable." The proposition suited Malcolm to a hair. By working for his keep, he got rid of the obligation, and acquired a right to grumble. As to the work he did, it really was not worth speaking of. Mrs. Moodie had a sort of rude bedstead made for him out of two large chests, and put up in a corner of the parlour. Upon that he lay, during the first fortnight of his stay, reading, smoking, and drinking whisky and water from morning till night. There was a mystery about the fellow which he did not care fully to clear up, but portions of his history oozed out.

"He was the son of an officer in the navy, who had not only attained a very high rank in the service, but, for his gallant conduct, had been made a Knight-Companion of the Bath. He had himself served his time as a midshipman on board his father's flag-ship, but had left the navy, and accepted a commission in the Buenos-Ayorean Service, during the political struggles in that province. He had commanded a sort of privateer under the government, to whom, by his own account, he had rendered many very signal services. Why he left South America, and came to Canada, he kept a profound secret. He had indulged in very vicious and dissipated courses since he came to the province, and by his own account had spent upwards of four thousand

pounds in a manner not over-creditable to him. . . . He was now considerably in debt. Money he had none; and, beyond the dirty fearnought blue seaman's jacket which he wore, a pair of trousers of the coarse cloth of the country, an old black vest that had seen better days, and two blue-checked shirts, clothes he had none. He shaved but once a week, never combed his hair, and never washed himself. A dirtier or more slovenly creature never before was dignified by the title of a gentleman. He was, however, a man of good education, of excellent abilities, and possessed a bitter sarcastic knowledge of the world; but he was selfish and unprincipled in the highest degree."

This pitiable sea-bear quarrelled with Mrs. Moodie's servants, disgusted and offended her by his ungentelemanly habit of swearing, and behaved altogether so outrageously that any one less forbearing and good-tempered than Captain Moodie, would have turned him out of the house before he had been a month in it. But the captain, who lacked not spirit on occasion, had Highland notions of hospitality; and, moreover, he pitied the unhappy scapegrace—whose vile temper was his own greatest curse—and bore with his infirmities. Malcolm got the ague, and poor Mrs. Moodie nursed him.

"During the cold fit, he did nothing but swear at the cold, and wished himself roasting; and, during the fever, he swore at the heat, and wished that he was sitting in no other garment than his shirt, on the north side of an iceberg."

The only trait that somewhat reconciled Mrs. Moodie to her rude guest was his affection for one of her children, a merry golden-haired little boy. When left alone with her in the house, he almost frightened her by his strange, sullen stare, and told her stories about wild deeds of bloodshed committed in his privateering days, and was very anxious to read her a manuscript work on South America, for which Murray, he said, had offered him a sum of money, but to which she preferred not listening. At last he got so indolent and insolent that Captain Moodie was roused to anger, sharply reproved him, and ordered him to be gone. But it was not a trifle in the way of rebuke that would drive Malcolm from free bed and board. He walked away for a few hours, and

then returned and joined the family party, as if nothing had happened. One day, however, a nickname applied to him by Mrs. Moodie's eldest girl put him in a furious passion, and he took himself off for ever, as his entertainers hoped. They were mistaken.

"Two months after, we were taking tea with a neighbour, who lived a mile below us on the small lake. Who should walk in but Mr. Malcolm? He greeted us with great warmth, for him; and when we rose to take leave, he rose and walked home by our side. 'Surely the little stumpy man (the name Kate had given him) is not returning to his old quarters?' I am still a babe in the affairs of men. Human nature has more strange varieties than any one menagerie can contain, and Malcolm was one of the oddest of her odd species. That night he slept in his old bed below the parlor window, and for three months afterwards he stuck to us like a beaver."

The manner of this strange being's final departure was as eccentric as that of his first coming. On Christmas eve he started after breakfast to walk into Peterborough to fetch raisins for next day's pudding. He never came back, but left Peterborough the same day with a stranger in a wagon. It was afterwards said that he had gone to Texas, and been killed at San Antonio de Bexar. Whatever became of him, he never again was seen in that part of Canada. Mrs. Moodie's account of his residence in her house is full of character, and admirable for its quietness and truth to nature. "Firing the Fallow," and "Our Logging Bee," are also, apart from their connection with the emigrant's fortunes, striking and interesting sketches of Canadian forest life. We are unable to dwell upon or extract from them, and must hasten to conclude our notice of this really fascinating book.

Rebellion broke out in Canada. Captain Moodie, although suffering from a severe accident he had met with whilst ploughing, felt his loyalty and soldiery irresistibly appealed to by the Queen's proclamation, calling upon all loyal gentlemen to join in suppressing the insurrection. Toronto was threatened by the insurgents, and armed bands were gathering on all sides for its relief. So Captain Moodie marched to the front.

Regiments of militia were formed, and in one of them he received command of a company. He left in January, and Mrs. Moodie remained alone with her children and Jenny—a faithful old Irish servant—to take care of the house. It was a dull and cheerless time. And yet her husband's appointment was a great boon and relief. His full pay as captain enabled him to remit money home, and to liquidate debts. His wife, on her side, was not inactive.

"Just at this period," she says, "I received a letter from a gentleman, requesting me to write for a magazine (the *Literary Garland*) just started in Montreal, with promise to remunerate me for my labours. Such an application was like a gleam of light springing up in the darkness."

When the day's toils—which were not trifling—were over, she robbed herself of sleep—which she greatly needed—to labour with her pen; writing by the light of what Irish Jenny called "sluts"—twisted rags, dipped in lard, and stuck in a bottle. Jenny viewed these literary pursuits with huge discontent.

"You were thin enough before you took to the pen," grumbled the affectionate old creature—"what good will it be to the children, dear heart! if you die afore your time by wasting your strength after that fashion?"

But Mrs. Moodie was not to be dissuaded from her new pursuit. She persevered, and with satisfactory results.

"I actually," she says, "shed tears of joy over the first twenty-dollar note I received from Montreal."

Emulous of her mistress's activity, Jenny undertook to make "a good lump" of maple-sugar, with the aid of little Sol, a hired boy, whom she grievously cuffed and ill-treated, when he upset the kettle, or committed other blunders. Every evening during the sugar-making Mrs. Moodie ran up to see Jenny in the bush, singing and boiling down the sap in front of her little shanty.

"The old woman was in her element, and afraid of nothing under the stars; she slept beside her kettles at night, and snapped her fingers at the idea of the least danger."

The sugar-making was a hot and wearisome occupation, but the result was a good store of sugar, molasses, and vinegar.

"Besides gaining a little money with my pen," writes Mrs. Moodie at about this time, "I practised a method of painting birds and butterflies upon the white velvety surface of the large fungi that grow plentifully upon the bark of the sugar maple. These had an attractive appearance; and my brother, who was a captain in one of the provisional regiments, sold a great many of them among the officers, without saying by whom they were painted. One rich lady in Peterborough, long since dead, ordered two dozen, to send as curiosities to England. These, at one shilling each, enabled me to buy shoes for the children, who, during our bad times, had been forced to dispense with these necessary coverings. How often, during the winter season, have I wept over their little chapped feet, literally washing them with my tears. But these days were to end. Providence was doing great things for us; and Hope raised at last her drooping head, to regard with a brighter glance, the far-off future. Slowly the winter rolled away; but he to whom every thought was turned, was still distant from his humble home. The receipt of an occasional letter from him was my only solace during his long absence, and we were still too poor to indulge often in the luxury."

The spring brought work. Corn and potatoes must be planted, and the garden dug and manured. By lending her oxen to a neighbour who had none, Mrs. Moodie obtained a little assistance; but most of the labour was performed by her and Jenny, the greatest jewel of an old woman the Emerald Isle ever sent forth to toil in American wildernesses. A short visit from the captain cheered the family. In the autumn, he expected, the regiment to which he belonged would be reduced. This was a melancholy anticipation, and his wife again beheld cruel poverty seated on their threshold. After her husband's departure the thought struck her that she would write to the Governor of Canada, plainly stating her circumstances, and asking him to retain Captain Moodie in the militia service. She knew nothing of Sir George Arthur, and received no reply to her application. But the Governor acted,

though he did not write, and acted kindly and generously. "The 16th of October my third son was born; and a few days after, my husband was appointed paymaster to the militia regiments in the V—— district, with the rank and full pay of captain." The appointment was not likely to be permanent, and Mrs. Moodie and the children remained at their log-cabin in the woods during the ensuing winter. Malignant scarlet fever attacked the whole family; a doctor was sent for, but did not come; Mrs. Moodie, herself ill, had to tend her five children; and when these recovered, she was stretched for many weeks upon a bed of sickness. Jenny, the most attached of humble friends, and a greater heroine in her way than many whom poets have sung and historians lauded, alone kept her suffering mistress company in the depths of the dark forest.

"Men could not be procured in that thinly-settled spot for love nor money; and I now fully realized the extent of Jenny's usefulness. Daily she yoked the oxen, and brought down from the bush fuel to maintain our fires, which she felled and chopped up with her own hands. She fed the cattle, and kept all things snug about the doors; not forgetting to load her master's two guns, 'in case,' as she said, 'the rebels should attack us in our retreat.'"

What says the quaint old song? that—

"The poor man alone, when he hears the
poor moan,
Of his morsel a morsel will give,
Well-a-day!"

It were a libel to adopt the sentiment to its full extent, when we witness the large measure of charity which the more prosperous classes in this country are ever ready to dispense to the poor and suffering. But doubtless the sympathy with distress is apt to be heartiest and warmest on the part of those who themselves have experienced the woes they witness. It is very touching to contemplate Mrs. Moodie walking twenty miles through a bleak forest—the ground covered with snow, and the thermometer far below zero—to minister to the necessities of one whose sufferings were greater even than her own.

Still more touching is the exquisite delicacy with which she and her friend Emilia imparted the relief they brought, and strove to bestow their charity without imposing an obligation. "The Walk to Dummer" is a chapter of Mrs. Moodie's book that alone would secure her the esteem and admiration of her readers. Captain N. was an Irish settler in Canada, who had encountered similar mishaps to those Captain Moodie had experienced—but in a very different spirit. He had taken to drinking, had deserted his family, and was supposed to have joined Mackenzie's band of ruffians on Navy Island. For nine weeks his wife and children had tasted no food but potatoes; for eighteen months they had eaten no meat. Before going to Mrs. Moodie, Jenny had been their servant for five years, and, although repeatedly beaten by her master with the iron ramrod of his gun, would still have remained with them, would he have permitted her. She sobbed bitterly on learning their sufferings, and that Miss Mary, "the tinder thing," and her brother, a boy of twelve, had to fetch fuel from the bush in that "oncommon savare weather." Mrs. Moodie was deeply affected at the recital of so much misery. She had bread for herself and children, and that was all. It was more than had Mrs. N. But for the willing there is ever a way, and Mrs. Moodie found means of doing good, where means there seemed to be none. Some ladies in the neighbourhood were desirous to do what they could for Mrs. N.; but they wished first to be assured that her condition really was as represented. They would be guided by the report of Mrs. Moodie and Emilia, if those two ladies would go to Dummer, the most western clearing of Canada's Far West, and ascertain the facts of the case. If they would! There was not an instant's hesitation. Joyfully they started on their Samaritan pilgrimage. Ladies, lounging on damask cushions in your well-hung carriages, read this account of a walk through the wilderness; read the twelfth chapter of Mrs. Moodie's second volume, and—having read it—you will assuredly read the whole of her book, and rise from its perusal with full hearts, and with

the resolution to imitate, as far as your opportunities allow—and to none of us, who seek them with a fervent and sincere spirit, shall opportunities be wanting—her energetic and truly Christian charity.

Le diable ne sera pas toujours derrière la porte, says the French proverb. The gentleman in question had long obstinately kept his station behind Mrs. Moodie's shanty door; but at last, despairing, doubtless, of a triumph over her courage and resignation, he fled discomfited. The militia disbanded, Captain Moodie's services were no longer needed. But his hard-saved pay had cleared off many debts, and prospects were brighter.

"The potato crop was gathered in, and I had collected my store of dandelion roots for our winter supply of coffee, when one day brought a letter to my husband from the Governor's secretary, offering him the situation of Sheriff of the V—— district. Once more he bade us farewell; but it was to go and make ready a home for us, that we should no more be separated from each other. Heartily did I return thanks to God that night for all his mercies to us."

Short time sufficed for preparation to quit the dreary log-house. Crops, furniture, farm-stock, and implements, were sold, and as soon as snow fell and sleighing was practicable, the family left the forest for their snug dwelling in the distant town of V——. Strange as it may seem, when the time came, Mrs. Moodie clung to her solitude.

"I did not like," she says, "to be dragged from it to mingle in gay scenes, in a busy town, and with gaily-dressed people. I was no longer fit for the world. I had lost all relish for the pursuits and pleasures which are so essential to its votaries; I was contented to live and die in obscurity. For seven years I had lived out of the world altogether; my person had been rendered coarse by hard work and exposure to the weather. I looked double the age I really was, and my hair was already sprinkled with grey."

Honour to such grey hairs, blanched in patient and courageous suffering. More lovely they than raven tresses, to all who prefer to the body's perishable beauty the imperishable qualities of the immortal soul!